

Palazzo Canevaro in Florence. The decorative and architectural history of the 19th-century building that is home to the American Consulate

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The images on pages 46-50 were provided by the concession of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali; the images on pages 17 and 18 by the Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario G.P. Vieusseux. The University of Florence granted permission to use the images on pages 15, 16, and 20.

This volume was published thanks to the contribution and collaboration of the American General Consulate in Florence.

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Graphic design and layout

Naomi Muirhead

Cover image

Final project of the façade on Via Palestro (Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario G.P. Vieusseux, FFP-483).

Print

Printing concluded in October 2019 by Lithografica IP, Florence for SACI Press.

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ISBN: 978-88-8549-505-0

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50123 Florence, Italy

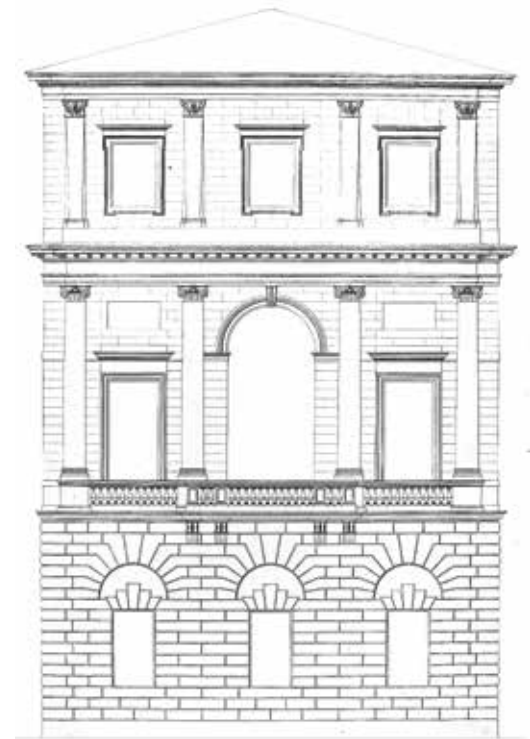
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Preface

This year we are celebrating the bicentennial of U.S. diplomatic presence in Florence.

Since the first consular agent was named in 1819, our primary duty has been to protect American citizens and interests in central Italy and facilitate stronger ties between them and the Italian communities in which they reside.

Over the last several decades, one of the largest and most influential components of the American community has been university programs. There are now upwards of 70 such programs in Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna, which host about 10,000 young American students every year.

These students study and learn but also give back – through charitable work and other projects that aim to leave something behind when they head back to the United States.

This book is an example of that commitment. The students and professors of Studio Arts College International (SACI) did a tremendous amount of research to bring alive Palazzo Canevaro – a concrete example of our shared U.S.-Italian history.

During the first 200 years of its existence, the U.S. consulate worked out of 10 different buildings around Florence before settling into Palazzo Canevaro in 1947. This historic building and its annex is one of three dozen diplomatic properties listed on the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Properties, reflecting its artistic

and architectural importance as well as its central role in American diplomatic history in Italy.

We are fortunate to have found such a great partner in SACI to help us understand and better appreciate this place the consulate now calls home.

**Benjamin V. Wohlauer,
U.S. Consul General Florence**

SACI is proud to have its faculty and students collaborate with the United States Consulate General in Florence in preparation for their 200-year anniversary celebration.

We are particularly grateful for the opportunity to have received such positive support and guidance from the Consul General, Benjamin Wohlauer.

SACI's Art History and Conservation faculty, along with their students, researched the history of the Consulate building, Palazzo Canevaro (designed by renowned Florentine architect and urban planner, Giuseppe Poggi in 1857), and were privileged to restore two of the palace's historical oil paintings.

Honored to have been able to contribute to the understanding of a part of Italy's rich cultural heritage, SACI presents in this guide the results of its research and conservation, revealing the remarkable history of the Palace's building and artworks.

**Steven J. Brittan,
SACI President**

Introduction

Palazzo Canevaro, today home to the American Consulate, is an elegant 19th-century edifice located on the Lungarno Vespucci in Florence. From its construction in 1857 until the first half of the 20th century, the building underwent significant modifications and adaptations, without altering a significant number of architectural and decorative features of extreme historical, artistic and conservative interest.

Three important families of non-Florentine origin succeeded one another in this structure: the Calcagnini d'Este, the Arese Lucini and, lastly, the Canevaro di Zoagli, whose leading figures played significant political and economic roles in the pre-unified and then national context.

The palace that forms the backdrop of these characters was designed by Giuseppe Poggi, the undisputed protagonist of civil architecture and urban development in 19th-century Italy, before being renovated over the years by other well-known architects such as Tito Bellini, Giuseppe Castellucci and Ferdinando Poggi.

What distinguishes the interior of the palace is the heterogeneity of styles, due not so much to the eclecticism of the rooms—typical of 19th-century taste—but more to the swift passage from one owner to the next within a few decades and thus creating a stratified effect in taste in the embellishments. And yet, both the frescoed rooms on the ground floor and first floor, along with the stuccoes, the furniture and fixtures, offer meaningful information about the choices of the patrons and the decorative tastes between the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the next.

We aim to bring a property arising at the time in which Florence was the capital of Italy to the attention of the

city, scholars and all those interested, retracing the main historical, architectural and ornamental phases with this preliminary and concise reference tool, which is accompanied by an iconographic collection and a partial reconnaissance of the main paintings preserved within the Palazzo,

The text was born from the collaboration between SACI (Studio Arts College International) and the American Consulate, availing of research conducted by: the Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario G.P. Vieusseux, the State Archives of Florence, the Historical Archive of the Municipality of Florence, the Uffizi Library, the University of Florence's Science and Technology Library, and the State Archives of Modena. However, due to accessibility issues, it was not possible to check the Arese Lucini Private Archive, which would have completed the documentation found in the other archival collections.

The information on the building contained in this short text, which serves as a brief guide before the release of more in-depth scientific contributions accompanied by notes (not included here for reasons of space and informative intent), refers to the texts obtained from the aforementioned documentary sources.

Thanks are due to the promoters of this guide, Benjamin V. Wohlauer (US Consul General, Florence), Steven Brittan (SACI President), Leo Rowland (SACI Dean) and all those who have contributed in various ways to its completion, in particular: Valeria Brunori (Conservator, US Embassy), Manila De Martino (US Consulate Office), Paolo Lamicela, Roberta Lapucci (SACI), Marie-Louise Lodge (SACI), Jacopo Mazzoni, Naomi Muirhead (SACI), Anne Pellegrini (SACI), Paolo Poli (US Consulate Office), Kathryn Rakich (US Consulate Office), Stefano Renzoni, Jacopo Santini (SACI), SACI MA Art History Students, Kari Varner, Cecilia Vicentini, and everyone at the referenced libraries and archives.

Authors of the texts

Alice Parri edited the text on pages 11-12; 15-20; 23-29; 33-53; Mariantonia Rinaldi edited the in-depth information on pages 13-14; 21-22; 30-31; Kathleen Buckley, Elisabeth Di Mauro, and Leah Strong, under the supervision of Alice Parri and Mariantonia Rinaldi, compiled the catalog of the pictorial works on pages 54-60.

Florence, a new building on Lungarno Vespucci



Palazzo Canevaro still delights today thanks to its distinguishing irregular trapezoidal form and the panoramic context in which it is positioned, with its main façade overlooking Lungarno Vespucci and one side facing the *piazzetta* with the statue of Garibaldi.

When the owners purchased the land to build upon, it was within an urban area outside the Florentine city walls that was under considerable expansion. This was the so-called “Nuovo Quartiere delle Cascine”—the New Cascine District—located between the new iron suspension bridge of San Leopoldo and that of Ponte alla Carraia.

In the mid-19th century, this area underwent significant modifications and transformations due to both the municipal intent to confer respectability and rationality to the road system along the River Arno embankment and the need to exploit new spaces for the great demand for private civic constructions.

Throughout these times, the banks of the Arno became a privileged location for urban reorganization initiatives, like other famous European centers such as Paris and London, while the new Lungarno Vespucci was the protagonist par excellence in the strategic development of residential buildings thanks to its proximity to the Leopolda railway track, which was currently being designed, and to the Cascine Park. The green space of the Cascine was greatly enjoyed by Florentine citizens and was a beloved setting for visitors and foreigners, whose numbers were rapidly on the rise.

Even before engineer Giuseppe Poggi laid his hands on the revolutionary urban plan of Florence (1864-1865), which culminated in the opening of Viale de' Colli—another charming and celebrated location because of its enchanting panorama—the Cascine was the first outdoor recreational area for Florence, its inhabitants and its visitors.

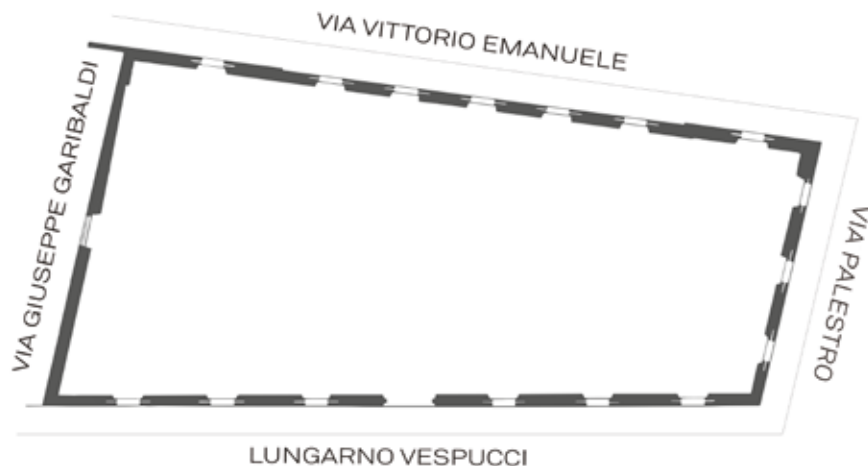
PALAZZO CANEVARO, EXTERIOR
VIEW FROM THE “PIAZZETTA”
WITH THE STATUE OF GARIBALDI.

The “trapezoidal” lot on which the current Palazzo Canevaro was constructed was purchased as part of an initial phase of land sales by the Calcagnini d’Este family from Ferrara in 1854. Palazzo Calcagnini was one of the first housing structures to be constructed in that area, when work was still underway to restructure the Arno embankment road system and to manage public lighting.

Giuseppe Poggi—who at the time was overseeing many private and public construction sites in the city and beyond—was called upon by Marquis Calcagnini to design the external façades of the palace, the distribution of the interior spaces and the main furnishing components. Poggi faced quite a few impediments, as we shall discover. Work on the building was to be completed in 1859, as evidenced by the documented illustrations dating back to this period, as well as by a letter that Calcagnini sent to Poggi in which explicit reference was made to the owner’s swift transfer into the new building.

1859 also marks an important moment in the history of Florence – that of the Grand Duke’s definitive departure from the city. From this point forth, the streets of the Cascine district bore new place names, celebrating the sites and characters of independence. Hence, the road that flanks the rear façade of the palace was named after Vittorio Emanuele II (today’s Corso Italia), and another delimiting one of its sides was named after Giuseppe Garibaldi.

ILLUSTRATIVE ELABORATION OF THE GROUND FLOOR PROJECT BY GIUSEPPE POGGI WITH AN INDICATION OF THE STREETS OVERLOOKED BY THE PALAZZO.



STROLLING THROUGH THE CASCINE DISTRICT

On June 12, 1848 the Stazione Leopolda was inaugurated. Being located just beyond Porta al Prato and close to the Parco delle Cascine, it became the terminus of the railway connecting Florence and Livorno.

Ten years prior, a new iron bridge (today’s Ponte alla Vittoria) was built to connect the two banks. Across the river, in the Oltrarno area, the bridge has its anchorage just beyond Porta San Frediano, in the so-called “del Pignone” entryway, which was named for the presence of a large mooring bollard.

These two modern structures radically transformed the routes for accessing the city and promoted urban development in the area between Porta al Prato and the River Arno. At the behest of Leopold II, Grand Duke of Tuscany (with the resolution of 1847), came the creation of a residential district around the Nuovo Lungarno, which extends from Ponte alla Carraia to the new iron bridge, re-initiating a project to amplify this area that dated back to the Napoleonic occupation but yet had never been executed.

1859 saw the definitive departure of the last Grand Duke, Leopold II, from the city and the transformations of the new district that overlapped with the urban and political/socio-economic transformations connected to the transfer of the Italian capital to Florence in 1865.

The position along the south-facing shores of the Arno, the breadth of the area and the presence of a number of significant palaces with their extensive gardens (Palazzo Corsini and Palazzo Venturi Ginori with the famous Orti Oricellari) and the

proximity to the Cascine Park, ensured this was an ideal residential area for the aristocracy and well-to-do bourgeoisie; a neighborhood with broad streets for new constructions. The Porta al Prato area was remodeled by means of expropriation. The road level was enlarged and three cross streets were created to connect the large piazza to the new Lungarno, crossing the new main street (today’s Corso Italia) that the Budini Gattai family construction company was building.

The piazza overlooking the Santa Lucia church was also enlarged throughout the same period.

It is here that, between 1820 and 1830, architect Luigi de Cambray Digny designed a neoclassical loggia to replace its previous wooden one. Since the 17th century, the Grand Ducal Court had watched the Palio dei Berberi from this loggia, whose starting point (or “mosse”) was just outside the Porta – as still recalled today by the name of Via del Ponte alle Mosse. That which remains of the original neoclassical colonnade is now incorporated into the building on the corner of Via Curtatone.

In a slightly staggered position before the loggia, the architect Ignazio Villa in 1850-52 was appointed by Count Scotti di Milano to design a building in neo-gothic style, whose exuberant adornment represented a real exception to the panorama of the time.

The “Casina Rossa” was so named due to the color of the plaster that contrasted with the rich stucco trimmings. These decorated the façade like lace but were mostly removed at the beginning of the 20th century.

Many foreigners also chose the new neighborhood to build their residences.

Giuseppe Poggi himself received various assignments within a few years. In 1842, he designed a new palace for Prince Poniatowski, to be constructed just beyond Porta al Prato in place of small pre-existing buildings (today, this is the Municipal Police headquarters). Poggi's original project, which envisaged the building in the center of the area, thus facing away from the street—Via Ponte alle Mosse—was rejected by the client, who opted for a palace whose façade faced directly onto the road. The garden behind the building was also designed by Poggi in line with the style of English gardens.

In 1857, the same architect was commissioned by Baroness Fiorella Favard de l'Anglade to build her city residence in new construction plots overlooking the river.

In this case, the architect positioned the edifice at the center of the construction area, encircling it with a garden filled with large trees and hedges in a range of botanical essences, along with the stalls, carriage house and caretaker's cottage. Poggi was thus dedicated to designing two buildings within the same time period, one for the Baroness Favard and another for Marquis Calcagnini that bordered the crossroads between Via Curtatone, Corso Vittorio Emanuele (today's Corso Italia) and Lungarno Vespucci.

The architect, through the gateway to the Palazzo Favard and the high and clean profile of the current American consulate, defined the urban space and perspectives branching off from this point.

In the sumptuous ballroom of her new palace, adorned with white and golden stucco, the Baroness Favard de l'Anglade would host parties and musical evenings that animated Florentine intellectual life throughout those years.

Indeed, there was no lack of entertainment in the neighborhood. In 1860, a "Panorama"

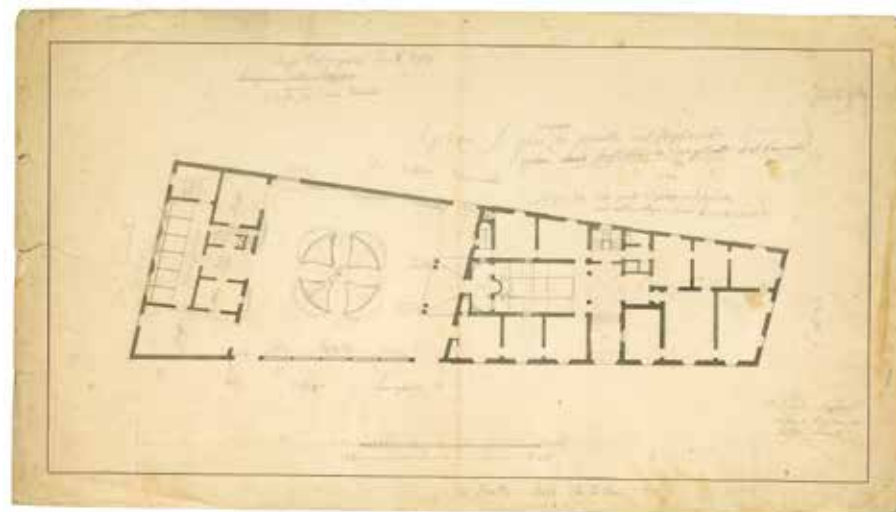
was created in the center of the piazza in front of the grand ducal loggia, being a building composed of two rotundas covered by skylights and connected by a rectangular body, inside of which three-dimensional vistas of the largest Italian cities were recreated with great effect, a choice that seemed to anticipate the future destiny of Florence as capital that was fast-approaching.

Although these types of attractions were highly in vogue, the Florentine company did not achieve the success it had hoped and the Panorama closed after just a year. The rotunda was taken over by the artist and carpenter Barbetti, whose name was long connected to the eccentric structure which, after being used as stables, was transformed into a cinema—the Stadium—around 1915. In 1862, along the new Corso Vittorio Emanuele (today's Corso Italia), the Regio Politeama Fiorentino theater, based on a project by Telemaco Bonaiuti, was inaugurated. In the theater there was also a coffee bar, as dictated by the fashion and customs of the time. Devastated by a fire in 1863, it was rebuilt only in 1882.

In the years in which Florence was the capital, the neighborhood's modern, eclectic and international character was confirmed. Some embassies were based in this area – that of France at Corso Italia 11; Greece at Via Palestro 6, Mexico at Via Ferruccio 3 (today's Via Magenta); Spain in the same Palazzo Poniatowski designed by Poggi; Sweden and Norway at Via Solferino 4 and finally the Swiss embassy in Palazzo Arcangeli di Strozza Volpe at Via Ferruccio 11 (today's Via Magenta). By this time, the Leopolda station had fallen into disuse. It went on to be restored by architect Marco Treves in 1867, becoming the headquarters of the Ministry of Finance – Duty and Customs General Directorate. In 1861, it was restructured by Giuseppe Martelli to host the Italian Exhibition, which was inaugurated by King Vittorio Emanuele II and saw the Macchiaioli painters of the Tuscan school alongside the major Italian artists.

Giuseppe Poggi: the first architectural project

Between 1886 and 1887, Florentine architect Giuseppe Poggi—now at the peak of his career and international fame—published two large volumes accompanied by drawings of the major architectural projects he had completed for private clients, including that of Palazzo Calcagnini d'Este.



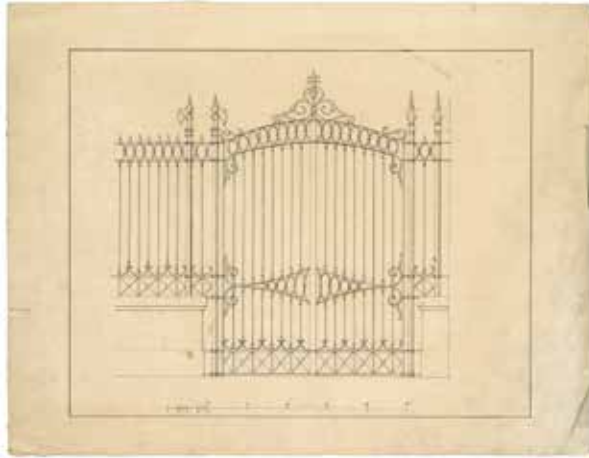
Both the designs and the text dedicated to this building offer a great deal of information regarding the genesis of the property and the choices of its first owner. Poggi informs us that the Marquis Calcagnini, having moved to Florence, wanted his building to be right in the new neighborhood of the Cascine; that he made the right decision in finding a good location but also that the seller had already built the foundations of a house and raised the walls on that lot, complicating any subsequent operation.

Marquis Calcagnini did not stop at building in the area already prepared but purchased other contiguous lands from the Municipality on which to construct the outbuildings for safeguarding the carriages, creating a

PROJECT FOR THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING, THE GARDEN AND STABLES WITH NOTES BY GIUSEPPE POGGI (UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE'S SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY, GIUSEPPE POGGI ARCHIVE, FGP_0147).

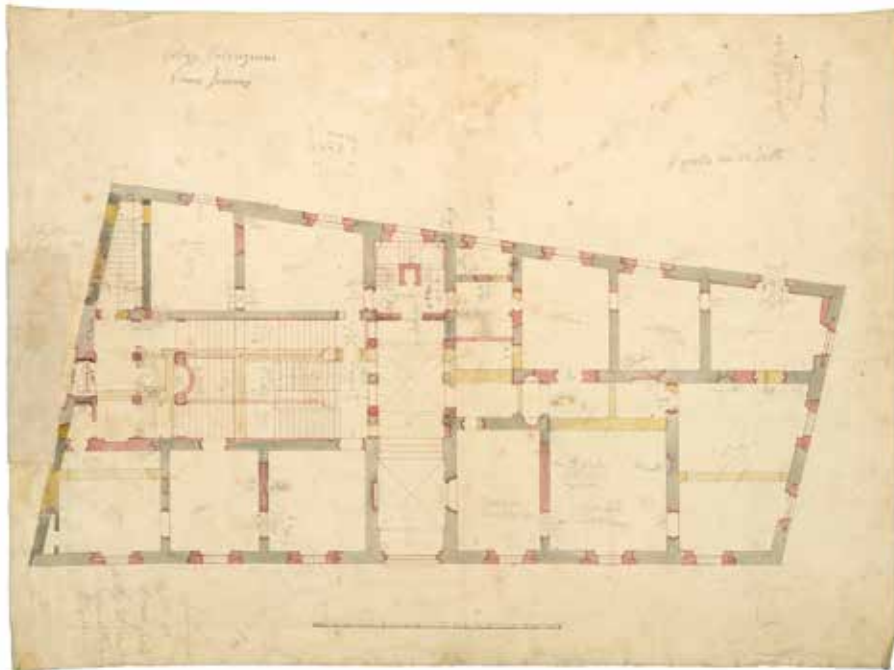
gated garden in the spaces in between these and the main edifice.

PROJECT FOR THE GATE
ACCESSING THE GARDEN
(UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE'S
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LIBRARY, GIUSEPPE POGGI
ARCHIVE, FGP_0090).

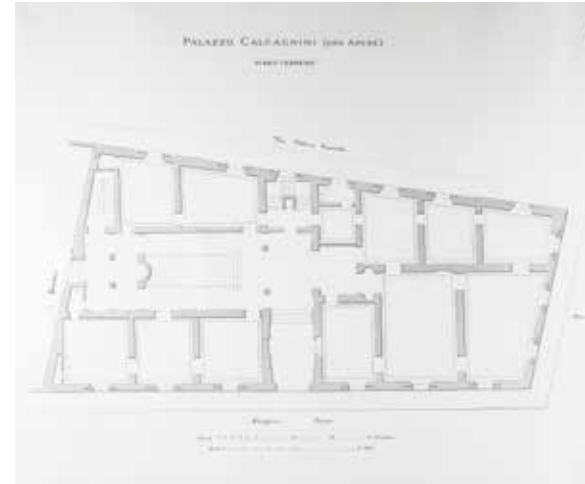


PROJECT TO DEMOLISH THE
FOUNDATION OF THE BUILDING'S
GROUND FLOOR, WITH NOTES BY
GIUSEPPE POGGI (UNIVERSITY
OF FLORENCE'S SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY, GIUSEPPE
POGGI ARCHIVE, FGP_0770).

Poggi's project was enthusiastically accepted by the client who immediately entrusted the execution, but—according to the architect—“the unfavorable perimeter, the ties to the old foundations and the prescription to form a stately dwelling in such a limited and irregular surface area, made it difficult to resolve the issue.”



The design phase thus commenced with a certain restriction in form, with Poggi having limited freedom in the architectural development of the surfaces areas that had already been laid and partially structured at the time of his appointment. Nonetheless, the architect adapted the spaces and existing structures in order to minimize demolitions and to create—even in terms of the façade—an impressive overall effect. To do so, he forged raised “proportions greater than those adopted in the local houses” on the outside of the building, while within he demolished “certain walls already erected, rebuilding others from the foundation.”



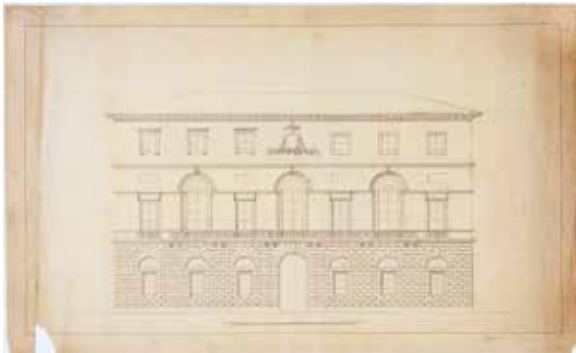
GROUND FLOOR PROJECT OF THE
PALAZZO PUBLISHED BY GIUSEPPE
POGGI IN 1887 (GABINETTO
SCIENTIFICO LETTERARIO G.P.
VIEUSSEUX, FFP-483).

The external layout of the Palazzo still maintains the early-16th-century structure conferred by Poggi, within which the architectural components typical of the Florentine Renaissance style are combined, consisting of three levels: a lower level or base in imitation ashlar, with a central entryway and six windows – three on each side; an intermediate level, with stringcourse and central terrace, interspersed by seven arched windows, three of which are central with greater light, separated by columns having ionic capitals; a third level is divided by seven rectangular windows split by columns with Corinthian capitals. Not visible outside this division are the mezzanine walkways formed in the rooms between the first and second floors towards Via Vittorio Emanuele (now Corso Italia), the illumination for which comes from the lunettes above the large windows on the ground and main floors.

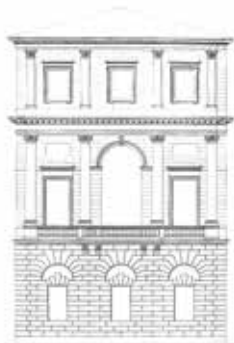
The architect studied and reconsidered the façade for which a design completed prior to 1857 reveals a different breakdown in respect of the final project of

the *piano nobile* (or, main floor) and the second floor. The *piano nobile* is characterized by an alternation of rectangular and arched lights, and the second floor, by the presence of only six rectangular windows with an empty heraldic crest surmounted by a crown.

PROJECT FOR THE CALCAGNINI
FAÇADE, C.A. 1857 (GABINETTO
SCIENTIFICO LETTERARIO G.P.
VIEUSSEUX, IT ACGV P.GP. 2.1-30).



PALAZZO CALCAGNINI (C.A. 1857)
FAÇADE DEL LUNGARNO



ABOVE AND RIGHT: FINAL
PROJECT FOR THE PALAZZO'S
FAÇADE (GABINETTO SCIENTIFICO
LETTERARIO G.P. VIEUSSEUX,
FFP-483).

For Poggi, the final compositional result was—given the limitations posed at the outset—more than decent. Nonetheless, he was not entirely convinced about the external cladding chosen by Calcagnini because it was made entirely of plasters, being “poor” and less durable materials than the “noble” stone that not only has the “benefit of greater durability but adds greater character and a more dignified touch to the building that could never be achieved with the common material, with plaster, and with the painters’ hues.”

As for the building’s interior, the dismantling of the masonry already created at the time of Calcagnini’s purchase was limited—with few exceptions—to the central area of the ground floor, where Poggi opened up a spacious entryway with two entrances: the main

one along the Lungarno and the secondary access on Via Vittorio Emanuele. In this same environment, he created a “double branch” staircase accessing the main floor and a secondary staircase in the kitchen to access the other floors, mezzanines, service areas and cellars. One half of the main floor was reserved for private rooms of the master of the house, with the other half used for entertaining, with a ballroom, library and parlors.

The designs Poggi created for the house spoke volumes, demonstrating the choices of the architect and those of the client. Dialogue between the two was probably more verbal than written yet Poggi did not fail to note certain considerations on his designs in terms of the compromises and solutions found regarding certain obstacles, on the preferences of the Marquis and on some of his proposals being discarded due to not being to Calcagnini’s liking. Such was the case with the adornment of the ceiling of the large reception hall, designed by Poggi in neo-Renaissance style, with symmetrical polylobate partitions animated by garlands, grotesques, phytomorphic elements and fantastic figures, to which a more “baroque”—a word used by the architect in his design—solution was preferred. The client imposed his “rococo” taste—to employ Poggi’s terminology once more—to this ballroom, which also had a hidden door positioned along the room’s stucco frieze, for the diffusion of the orchestra’s music and which in all likelihood suggested non-Tuscan labor, whose origin we do not know. The current elaborate decoration within the area is the original Calcagnini work, with only certain yet significant details modified at the time of the Canevaro Counts, such as the heraldic crests embossed in stucco at the corners of the ceiling.

Many significant elements of the Palazzo’s internal design come from Poggi’s elaborate designs for the entrance and vestibule of the building: from the doors to the glass and mirrors, still located within this area, to the breakdown in pilasters in the lobby before the monumental staircase. Some of the carved solid-wood doors accessing the entertaining areas on the main floor also had “exposed” glass for the best diffusion of light, bearing masks adorned with phytomorphic faces featured in the clipei of the central panels on each door that can still be traced back to the Calcagnini period and to Poggi’s direction of the works which, both with this building and the nearby Villa Favard—another Poggi project coming a few years after that of the Calcagnini—present similar decorative motifs in the fixtures and stucco ornamentations of the antechamber and corridors.



ENTRANCE DOORS TO THE
ENTERTAINING AREAS OF THE
MAIN FLOOR OF THE BUILDING.



STUCCO DECORATIONS IN THE
BALLROOM’S ANTECHAMBER.

GIUSEPPE POGGI'S PROJECT
FOR ADORNING THE BALLROOM
CEILING (UNIVERSITY OF
FLORENCE'S SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY, GIUSEPPE
POGGI ARCHIVE, FGP_785).



ABOVE AND RIGHT: THE
BALLROOM'S CURRENT STUCCO
VAULT — A MORE "BAROQUE"
SOLUTION WAS PREFERRED
TO POGGI'S DESIGN, WITH
THE HERALDIC CRESTS IN
THE CORNERS ADDED BY THE
CANEVARO FAMILY.



GIUSEPPE POGGI BETWEEN THE RENAISSANCE AND RISORGIMENTO

Born in Florence in 1811, Giuseppe Poggi trained as an engineer and architect at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence and in the private studio of Engineer Bartolomeo Silvestri.

Throughout his formative years, he wrote in his memoirs, *Ricordi* "[...] to have measured much of Palazzo Rucellai, Palazzo Giacomini, and others in the city suspended in a harness [...]" To such acrobatic exercises aimed at directly analyzing the historical buildings in the city, Poggi combines the study of 16th-century treatises, Greek and Roman monuments, mathematics and botany, which would go on to play a central role in his future career [see pages 30-31]. His love for and interest in Renaissance architecture merged with his admiration for the neoclassical "purity" of Pasquale Poccianti, considered at the time one of the most important Tuscan architects (and whose daughter, Fulvia, Poggi would marry in 1850).

Upon concluding his studies in September 1845, Poggi embarked on a long journey that would take him to cities such as Rome, Venice, Vienna, Geneva, Lausanne, London and Paris (to which he would return in the mid-1860s). In each location, the architect had the opportunity to see the European innovations in urban planning, to which he would refer upon being appointed by the City of Florence in 1864 to complete the project to expand the city.

Once returned from his European tour, Poggi took part in the independence movements and in 1848, as a Civil Engineering Officer, established the military field of Montanara. Subsequently, in the nearby battlefield of Curtatone, a monument to the memory of

the fallen—designed by Poggi himself—would be erected.

Despite his unassuming nature, in 1841 Poggi jotted down in his diary, "I am unable to procure the slightest deal or commission. A single step, a compliment that has the second purpose of procuring business for myself, I abhor [...]" On returning to Florence, also thanks to the help of his father-in-law, he found a solid clientele in the Florentine and foreigner bourgeoisie and aristocracy for which to design villas and palaces, and to renovate ancient buildings to be adapted both to the new needs and urban transformations that had massively affected the city from the middle of the century.

Poggi built ex-novo palaces for almost all of his clients, such as those in the Nuovo Lungarno [see pages 13-14] and, at the same time, renovated the oldest dwellings, receiving multiple assignments from the same families.

What was surprising was the quantity and consistency of the operations Poggi completed in the most significant Florentine buildings, often the result of urban requalification work, a subject that local citizens have taken an interest in since the 1840s.

In conjunction with the expansion of the Arno embankment, Poggi worked on Palazzo Capponi alle Rovinate, redistributing the interior spaces with the creation of a spacious entrance for carriages and reorganizing the façade on the enlarged stretch of the Lungarno Torigiani. Similarly, he restored Palazzo Guicciardini, along the same bank of

the Arno river, where he converted the side of the building overlooking the river onto the main façade and, consequently, redistributed all the interior spaces. In 1864, came the adaptation of Palazzo Strozzi to the new road layout created with the enlargement of the street of the same name during the enhancement works of the old market area. Poggi would restore the “street bench” in *pietra serena* (a type of gray sandstone) that runs along the perimeter of the building, as well as—under his direct instruction—enlarging the little piazza overlooking the palace to “better enjoy the artistic qualities of the work.”

Even more emblematic was the extension of Palazzo Gondi in Piazza San Firenze between 1870 and 1874, whereby doubling the façade with the addition of a third entrance door towards the corner with Via de' Gondi, Poggi substantially transformed the relationship between the building and the surrounding urban structure. Using high quality brick materials, similar to those pre-existing, and following the original forms, the radical operation by the 19th-century architect succeeded perfectly in merging with Giuliano da San Gallo's original planning.

The turning point in Giuseppe Poggi's career came upon being tasked with Florence's urban renovation, in conjunction with the transfer of the Italian capital to the Tuscan city. From 1864, this appointment would take up much of his energies. In fact, in his *Ricordi* (written from 1879 and published posthumously in 1909), he writes, “I was 54 years old [...] with an extensive clientele and a very favorable annual income” which he had to largely renounce in order to

devote himself to a “[...] flattering and very welcome task, but one that was also very burdensome [...]” The success of Florence's reconstruction led to him receiving other important public appointments, including the development plan for the Carignano district in Genoa in 1873, for which he was inspired by his Viale dei Colli project, followed by that of Sanremo in 1875. None of these, however, were ever realized.

The latter years of his life, embittered by the “Florentine Question” [see pages 30-31] saw Poggi dedicate himself to his memoirs and to curating an edition of drawings of the buildings he had designed, of which he saw only the prints of the first two volumes published between 1886 and 1887.

Giuseppe Poggi died in Florence on March 5, 1901. In 1911, on the centenary of his birth, as Del Lungo recalls: “The City Council [...] decided to give Giuseppe Poggi's name to the Piazza delle Molina and Viale delle Rampe leading up to Piazzale Michelangelo [...]” while Via Guelfa 5 saw the placement of the following plaque:

“GIUSEPPE POGGI
ARCHITETTO E INGEGNERE FIORENTINO
NELL'ARTE SUA PER INSIGNI OPERE MAESTRO
IN QUESTA CASA MORTO NONAGERIANO IL
5 MARZO 1901
LA CITTÀ NEI DESTINI ITALICI RIFIORENTE
AMPLIÒ DI LÀ DALLE MURA DEL SECOL DI DANTE
LA CIRCONDÒ DI NUOVA BELLEZZA
DALLE INONDAZIONI LA FECE SICURA
ESEMPIO MEMORABILE
D'ARTISTA E DI CITTADINO.
NEL PRIMO CENTENARIO DELLA NASCITA
MCMXI
IL COMUNE
ADEMPIENDO UN VOTO POPOLARE
POSE QUESTO RICORDO.”

The Calcagnini d'Este: a family from Ferrara in Florence

The Calcagnini d'Este family hailed from an ancient and noble lineage of Germanic origin. In the 14th century, the family possessed many fiefdoms in Emilia Romagna. In the following century, the Este gifted them the historic family residence, Castello di Fusignano. In 1469, Emperor Frederick III granted them the title of Counts and in 1524, they added the extension “degli Este” to their surname, thanks to the marriage of military leader Alfonso Calcagnini and Laura d'Este, daughter of Rinaldo di Niccolò III d'Este. In 1605, they finally acquired the title of marquise. The family's importance was confirmed, in more recent times, by its inclusion in the monumental 19th-century index of ancient and noble families of Pompeo Litta: *Le Famiglie Celebri di Italia*.

In this family tree, Francesco Calcagnini is cited as being Assistant to the Council of State of the Italic Kingdom, founded by Napoleon, the chamberlain of the Emperor as of 1813 and, following the fall of the Empire, first knight of the Order of Christ, to which only Catholics of noble descendants had access, then Controller of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, an appointment given to those with a particularly extensive commitment at the service of the church. Litta also recorded the marriage between Francesco and Silvia Maffei, daughter of Marquis Antonio Maffei di Verona, from whom came the first-born Manfredo.

Historically known for their great passion for collecting, over the centuries the Calcagnini managed to accumulate within their dwellings in Ferrara and Emilia quite a considerable quantitative and qualitative artistic heritage (with paintings including works by Dosso Dossi, Scarsellino and Guercino), which was dispersed as of the second half of the 19th century via subsequent sales.

In 1840, by which time the Marquis Francesco had already been living in Florence for a decade, most of

the family collection was still safeguarded in Ferrara. From the Tuscan capital, Calcagnini continued to oversee the restoration works undertaken to the paintings in his collection, but it seems unlikely that there was a consistent transfer of the works in the collection from Ferrara to Florence. This is all the more so due to Francesco not having had the chance to settle into the building along the Arno embankment due to his passing away in 1854—the very year in which the lot was purchased.

It was thus his son Manfredo who oversaw the negotiations for the purchase of the land and requested Poggi to direct the construction works. In October 1859, from the Castello di Fusignano where he was living while waiting to transfer to Florence, Manfredo wrote to Poggi to ensure him that everything was “in order, and in a habitable state” for his family to move into the building along the Lungarno Vespucci by the end of the following month, given that “passing more of the winter season” in the Fusignano countryside had proved to be “too uncomfortable, and bothersome.”

In 1859, Manfredo and his wife Sofia Ruschi, daughter of Count Gerolamo Ruschi, moved into the building designed by Poggi. Yet, only a few years later, the Calcagnini family sold the palace to Francesco Arese Lucini, who likely purchased the property in 1866 along with part of the furnishings. From the only Calcagnini inventory to have been found thus far, relating merely to furnishings (but not to the painting collection), drawn up in 1867 as part of the sale, details emerge regarding the decor of the rooms, which seem to have been characterized by a predominant color for the walls and fabric, but not always preserved. Thus, there was a blue room on both the ground and second floors, while the first floor had a green room and a “Pompeian blue living room,” the latter evidently decorated with fantastic grotesque motifs and painted architecture.

Decorating the interior: murals and ornamental paintings

Although the Calcagnini's residency in the palace was ultimately very brief, their resounding commitment to the building and interior adornment of the rooms was anything but insignificant. The Calcagnini can be rightly considered as the architects of the external presentation of the building—practically unchanged from the time of its construction to date—and of the internal layout of the main reception areas (the large atrium, monumental staircase, the partition of the rooms on the ground and noble floors), as well as its most extensive wall paintings.

The most evident testimony of the Calcagnini's time inside the Palazzo is the representation of the Marquises' heraldic crests in the large hall on the ground floor, overlooking the *piazzetta* with the statue of Garibaldi.

Indeed, the ceiling of this room is painted with a sumptuous frieze that extends above an imposing cornice in order to create the illusion of a gilded wooden structure. At the corners of the frieze, featuring gilt tapestry fabric inserts, are shells containing designs of armor, a typical motif in wall decorations but also alluding to the historical devotion of the Calcagnini family, having gone to battle as military leaders for the Este family. The lateral stretches of the ceiling are adorned with fantastic figures, a glass ball containing seven goldfish and classical statues upholding garlands and vases concluding with floral compositions. Finally, in the center of each long wall, the cornices culminate with a portrayal of the Calcagnini d'Este emblem on one side, dominated by a stork and depicting three golden lilies in the first, a lion in the second, a double-headed eagle in the third,



DETAILS OF THE HERALDIC SHIELDS OF THE CALCAGNINI AND RUSCHI FAMILIES IN THE HERALDIC CREST ROOM.



ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING ADORNED WITH FLORAL QUADRATURA; DETAILS.

and three balls in the fourth accompanied by the motto of fidelity and discretion, IL EST BIEN SECRET ("The secret is well-kept"); on the other side is that of the Ruschi family, being the lineage of Manfredo Calcagnini's bride, depicting a black eagle at the top, a central lion passant with three blades of "Rusca" grass per side, and three red bars on a silver background at the base, accompanied by the family's historic motto, NIL DIFFICILE VOLENTI ("Nothing is difficult for he who is willing").

The decorative style employed in this room is also featured in other rooms of the palace in the adornment of an equal number of painted ceilings, which could hypothetically hail back to the Calcagnini period. On the ceiling of a room on the second floor is a polylobed quadratura enriched with scroll adornments and floral decorations within shells very similar to those in the heraldic crest room. Also on the second floor, the vault of another nearby room is characterized by a quadratura with gilded and carved imitation wooden coffers with four flying putti in the center bearing a basket of flowers and, within circular scores in the corners, depictions of river scenes. The composition concludes with an illusionistic architectural decoration comprised of empty heraldic crests, transparent vases holding flowers—similar to those in the previous room—and jutting gables on which pairs of monochrome putti pose with mirrors, flowers, chests brimming with delights, and jugs.

Given the type of subjects depicted, it is assumed that both rooms were conceived for the private use of the lords of the house, namely as bedrooms and dressing rooms. This fact is documented with certainty for the Canevaro period of residence, with there being the room bearing a polylobed quadratura that served as the Duke's bedroom, the room with putti, the Duchess' dressing room, and an intermediate room that served as her bedroom.

Also in this case, the authorship of the paintings remains unknown, as per most of the wall decorations including those in the room on the ground floor depicting the Allegory of Geography or Astronomy. In the center of the ceiling, a female figure measuring a celestial sphere is represented while a putto behind her scans the sky with a telescope. The scene is encapsulated within a frame adorned with ancient goblets and zodiac signs. From this central area,

there are four sections adorned with grotesques and plaques containing an equal number of putti intent on playing with maps, telescopes and spheres. The frieze, which runs along the four walls and surrounds these chambers, is divided into sixteen representations of animals, alternating with monochrome figures of ancient gods within niches. Despite being a decoration of inferior stylistic quality in respect of the other pictorial examples preserved within the palace, the representation of the various animal species combined with the use of the grotesque appears to take inspiration from northern models, such as the Camerino di Enea and that of the Camerino delle Grazie in the Palazzo Giardino in Sabbioneta. The first study, in particular (created for Duke Vespasiano Gonzaga at the end of the 16th century) is characterized by a collection of varied fauna distributed throughout the coffered spaces. The re-elaboration of this motif could thus be connected to a historical and identity requisite, bringing to mind the connection of the Calcagnini with the Gonzaga family via one of its ancestors, Francesco Calcagnini (1475), a man of arms at the service of the Dukes of Mantua, and bringing to the new Florentine residence a figurative recollection of this context of origin, being a reason that—as Giuseppe Poggi suggests—would have induced the Marquises to avail of non-Tuscan artistic labor.

The last inhabitants of the Florentine palace, the Canevaro Dukes, would undoubtedly have preserved this interesting subject—the Geography—as a reminder of the origin of their economic and commercial fortune, amassed in Latin America before spreading all over the world.



PUTTI ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING; DETAILS.



ABOVE AND LEFT: ROOM OF THE ALLEGORY OF GEOGRAPHY, IN WHOLE AND IN DETAIL.



The Allegory of history: neo-18th-century between Tuscany and Emilia

Amongst the decorations that leave most uncertainty regarding the period of construction is the stunning frescoed ceiling of the corner room on the ground floor, overlooking the garden. An architectural innovation consisting of imposing balusters, rich sculptured and protruding bases, monochrome statues, and vaulted domes, all culminates in the central scene of the Allegory of History. In this, the personification of History—a female figure intent on writing in an open book yet with her gaze already off in the distance, towards the future—is accompanied by a young woman—being Fame—bearing a cornet and a bearded old man with hourglass and scythe—Time. Under the lunettes and at the intersection of the arches are the personifications of the four cardinal virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice, joined by other moral virtues.

The work is stylistically characterized by a conscious resumption of 18th-century models to which are combined clear borrowings from 16th-century styles, in particular in the poses of certain virtues. This pronounced 18th-century transplant could stem from the specific desire of the clients, and significantly refer to prototypes taken up in Tuscany by artists such as Lorenzo del Moro, a well-known early-18th-century illusionistic ceiling artist in Florence, as well as in the Emilia region, with examples borrowed from that great tradition of quadratura, which had already had a significant influence on the Tuscan artistic production during the 18th century. The Emilia reference could also be a pointed clue to the reference, with this work again being commissioned by the Calcagnini.



DETAIL OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUE OF PRUDENCE.



DETAIL OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUE OF FORTITUDE.

LEFT PAGE: FRESCOED VAULT OF A ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR WITH THE ALLEGORY OF HISTORY.



A new owner: Francesco Arese Lucini

On September 5, 1866, economic motives forced Marquis Manfredo Calcagnini to sell the Florentine palace on the Lungarno to Count Francesco Benedetto Arese Lucini.

The Arese family hailed from ancient Milanese nobility. The social and familiar context in which Francesco Arese was educated as a young man was characterized by a great broadmindedness and strong patriotic mindset. His uncle, Francesco Teodoro Arese Lucini (1778-1835), was an active fighter who joined the French troops of the Cisalpine Republic in his youth to defend Liguria against the Austro-Russian military forces. For his campaigns in Dalmatia, Tyrol, Carinthia and Croatia and for his war merits, he was awarded the knighthood of the Order of the Iron Crown and the title of Baron of the Kingdom of Italy, as well as the Legion of Honor by Emperor Napoleon. Late in life, he was involved in the conspiracy to liberate Lombardy from Austrian rule and was sentenced to spend three years in the Špilberk Castle prison. This political and military activism, ultimately resulting in exile, was combined with a lively passion for art and collecting. Indeed, he amassed a rich and extensive assembly of works in Milan, the majority of which went to auction following his death. As proof of his great artistic patronage, his countenance has been handed down to us thanks to a portrait created by painter Francesco Hayez.

Lesser known than Francesco Teodoro was his brother, Marco VI Arese Lucini, father of Francesco Benedetto, who held important administrative and diplomatic positions for the Kingdom of Italy and the municipality of Milan. Francesco Benedetto's mother, Antonietta Fagnani Arese, was a cultured Milanese noblewoman who played a leading role in the intellectual and literary society of the time, being famed for her relationship with Ugo Foscolo who dedicated the poem *All'Amica Risanata* to her.

BALLROOM, MONOCHROME
MURALS WITH BUCOLIC SCENES
AND STUCCO.

Francesco Benedetto (Milan 1805–Florence 1881), the future buyer of the Palazzo along Lungarno Vespucci, inherited his uncle's resourcefulness at a young age, soon becoming affiliated with the anti-Austrian rioting group and establishing strong connections with France, with which he had long partaken in diplomatic mediations on behalf of Italy and Cavour. Indeed, Francesco had been connected to the nation since his youth, having fled to Switzerland due to his involvement in the 1831 uprisings. It was there he met another person to have been exiled, Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte (the future Napoleon III). The two became friends and a few years later, embarked on a trip to America together (a book of memoirs, published by Sellerio in 2001, summarized this journey from New York to the Wild West). In 1848, having since returned to his homeland yet still fleeing from the Austrians, Francis settled in Genoa, where he became Deputy of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sardinia.

In 1865, following Florence's election as the capital of Italy, all of the bureaucratic and parliamentary structures that were first established in Turin flowed into the Tuscan capital. Francesco Arese had no choice but to follow the rest of the political apparatus due to his role as Senator of the Kingdom and, in 1866, with the purchase of Palazzo Calcagnini, established himself in Florence.

BALLROOM, MONOCHROME
MURALS WITH BUCOLIC SCENES
AND STUCCO.



While the purchase of the building by the Arese family is documented, there is scarce information at this point in time regarding the relative works that Francesco would have commissioned for his new residence. The same heraldic crest of the family—a pair of black wings and the head of the empire (the imperial eagle),



along with the motto PER LEALTÀ MANTENER—does not appear to be in any wall decoration or decor within the building. This is rather strange when considering that the Arese family lived in the palace for almost fifteen years. Upon the death of Count Francesco in 1881, the building passed to his son Marco Arese, who only kept it for two years before selling to the Canevaro Dukes.

In all likelihood, the monochrome pastoral scenes in red and ochre shades placed above the mirrors and along the base of the side walls in the ballroom on the main floor date back to the Arese period, if not that of the Calcagnini. Most of these decorations—which depict villagers, farmers and romantic pastoral scenes—have suffered considerable damage with significant repainting operations rendering it difficult to conduct a suitable stylistic analysis. The scenes positioned above the mirrors along the shorter sides of the room were partially obliterated with the overlapping of a high stucco pediment with scrolls, which appears to have been added by the Canevaro family.

ABOVE AND BELOW: BALLROOM,
MONOCHROME MURALS WITH
BUCOLIC SCENES AND STUCCO.



The Canevaro di Zoagli

The Canevaro family originates from an ancient Ligurian dynasty assimilated into the context of Genoese patricians. At the end of the 18th century, the family fell into a state of decline and returned to its province of origin, the territory of Zoagli. In the early 19th century, Giuseppe Zoagli (1803-1883) embarked at a very young age aboard a ship bound for Cuba, following his father Giacomo in the practice of navigation. At the age of twenty, he became captain of a sailing ship with which he conducted many trips to Central America. This profession led him to founding a new company connected to naval and commercial activities, opening stores selling foodstuffs in Panama and Peru. In 1830, he transferred to Lima where he married Francisca Valega, daughter of a Genoese merchant, Don Felice Valega. The wife of Giuseppe—or rather, José—Canevaro, bore twelve children, some of whom were sent to study in Europe where they remained, embarking on highly successful political and military careers.

With the help of the numerous offspring, the founder established a rich and thriving enterprise in “Canevaro & Sons,” which dealt with transport, shipping and export to Europe of guano preserved in the deposits of the islands off the coast of Peru and Chile.

The lucrative commercial activity made him so wealthy that he became one of the most important financial partners of Italy at the time of Cavour and the Risorgimento wars, during which he undertook to allocate 350,000 pounds sterling to field hospitals. Thanks to the economic support he granted to Vittorio Emanuele II during the First and Second War of Independence, he was initially appointed Consul General of the Kingdom of Sardinia in Peru, then Consul of the Kingdom of Italy and Count.

The Canevaro family owned a great deal of real estate throughout the peninsula, mainly concentrated in the

Ligurian and Tuscan territories. In addition to the 16th-century Zoagli Castle and estate, on which extensive renovations were undertaken by his descendants, José owned the Castelvares farm in Mercatale in Val di Pesa, a palace in La Spezia, and one in Rome. The year of his death coincided with the purchase by his eldest son, Francesco Giuseppe, of the Palazzo Arese on the Lungarno in Florence.

The Canevaro Family

Giuseppe (Josè) Canevaro (Zoagli 1803–La Spezia 1883)

(married Francisca Valega in 1830, with whom he had twelve children)

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Francesco Giuseppe (Josè) Canevaro di Zoagli (Parigi 1837–Lima 1900)

(married Maria Luisa Fernanda Soyer y Lavalle)

Purchased the building on the Lungarno in 1883

|

Raffaele Canevaro di Zoagli (Lima 1843–Lima 1919)

(brother of Duke Francesco Giuseppe, married Inés Laos Elguera)

Acquired the palace following his brother's death and undertook the initial restorations

|

Emanuele Giuseppe (Josè) Ceferino Canevaro di Zoagli (?-?)

(first marriage to Luisa Ridolfi and second to Dianora Guicciardini)

Commissioned numerous renovations and decoration of the building

|

Maria Caterina Canevaro nei Ghelli

Raffaele 'Lele' Canevaro di Zoagli (Florence 1913–1960)

(married Terry Dalmazia Campeiro)

Together with his sister Maria Caterina, sold the palace to the American Consulate

|

Transformations and restorations



STUCCO AND GILDING DECORATION OF THE HALLS ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE BUILDING: A CEILING WITH AN ORIENTALIZING GEOMETRIC PATTERN.

A STUCCO SHIELD WITH A GOLDEN STAR IN THE CENTER, BEING THE SYMBOL OF THE CANEVARO FAMILY.



Francesco Giuseppe (1836-1900), Italian politician, Minister of the Navy and Foreign Affairs, obtained the concession via Royal Decree to add “di Zoagli” to his surname and to acquire the title of Duke of Castelvairi for his family.

In 1883, he purchased the palace along Florence’s Lungarno from Marco Arese Lucini for 305,000 lire. The

following year, he and his wife Luisa Soyer Lavalle undertook great restoration works on the entryway.

Called upon to direct the construction site and to oversee the craftsmen, carpenters, masons, gilders, varnishers and decorators, was the Florentine architect Tito Bellini, scholar at the Reale Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze.

The restoration work was not limited to an internal renovation but also involved the exterior appearance of the building. Indeed, both the palace and the annex to the garden were restored with the revitalization of the lime molding, cornices, corbels and thresholds,

work on the roofs of the stable and painting of all façades in “travertine stone color.” The mason Gaetano Morozzi was commissioned to oversee the external work and help internally with the replacement of the doors and thresholds and with erecting the scaffolding to be used by the decorators who had to restore and

decorate the walls and ceilings in many rooms.

Antonio Bisoni and Agostino Niccoli, Florentine gilders and painters, oversaw the restoration of the monumental staircase that was “washed, stuccoed, leveled,” coated in white, marbled and painted; the reconstruction of four heraldic crests in the dining room; as well as the plastering and re-gilding of many rooms, some of which have a suggestive name, indicative of the eclectic and oriental taste behind the commissioning. Examples include the “Turkish Room” and the room alongside it where, in addition to replacing the missing gilding, two heraldic crests and two shields with golden figures were added.



GOLDEN MIRROR WITH THE CANEVARO HERALDIC CREST.

It is reasonable to think that for economic reasons, the Canevaro family maintained—where possible—the decorations in the works of artistic value as previously completed by the Calcagnini and Arese, while also seeking to customize and renew the apartments with their own tastes and symbols of their presence, exemplified in the ‘conversing’ crests of the house: a dog (from the surname Canevaro, given that ‘cane’ translates to ‘dog’) kneeling on the edge of a rock and facing a star, sometimes accompanied by the motto NOSTRAM DUXERUNT SIDERA CERTA RATEM (“Sure stars guided our ship”), together with the recurrence in the furniture (documented but no longer traceable) and in the reception areas of the palace such as the external façade (stone crest), the crowning of the entrance gate (iron crest with motto) and the gilded mirror in the landing beneath the monumental staircase (golden metal crest).

Thus, decorative mason Michele Piovano restored the ceilings in several rooms with stucco, adornments and frames, adding four noble heraldic crests with ducal crown to the dining room, four more to the living room at the end of the salon, and two crests with carved letters in bas-relief to the living room near the “Arab Room.” The

STUCCO AND DECORATIONS IN THE ROOMS ON THE MAIN FLOOR.





STUCCO AND DECORATIONS IN THE ROOMS ON THE MAIN FLOOR.

CARVED AND GILDED DOOR WITH MIRRORS ON THE MAIN FLOOR.

restoration continued on the cornices and adornments around the ceiling, on the walls and pilasters on the staircase, together with the columns and pilasters of the vestibule, where polished stucco was applied. The same fixtures designed at the time of Giuseppe Poggi were adapted, in some cases with the addition of stucco and gilding, in relation to the new decorative layout of the environment.

This period also dates back to when four initials with the letter “C” and four iron crowns above the entrance gates to the garden were created, still visible today.

Marble worker and stonemason Egisto Orlandini cleaned the pre-existing “baroque fireplace in the hall on the first floor,” while renovating the flooring of the landings and on the ground floor.

The same craftsman was also tasked with having a sculpture transported inside the palace—no longer present today—depicting a weeping woman above its



base that would be placed in the entry vestibule, in the manner of other stately villas of the time, such as that of neighboring Fiorella Favard.

Despite all these renovations, already at the end of the 1880s, the family pondered the possibility of renting part of the unused quarters. Ultimately, with a private agreement dated November 9, 1900, Duke Giuseppe Francesco undertook to sell the entire building with garden and stables to Engineer Cesare Spighi (a well-known Florentine architect and member of the compartment for the Conservation of the Monuments of Tuscany) for 355,000 lire (furniture excluded), provided that the sale took place by December 31 of that same year.



RICHLY CARVED FIREPLACE IN A HALL ON THE FIRST FLOOR.

Giuseppe Francesco's sudden death in 1900 in a railway accident in France gave rise to lengthy negotiations for the division of the significant holdings left by the Duke, who had named his brother Felice Napoleone, Admiral of the Italian Maritime Republic and Senator of the Kingdom, as executor of his will. Family agreements led to the conferment of the Florentine palace to one of the younger brothers—Raffaele Canevaro—who took over ownership with the aim of giving it as a wedding gift (once having liquidated the shares due to his other siblings) for his son Emanuele Giuseppe Ceferino's marriage to Countess Luisa Ridolfi, granddaughter of Baron Bettino Ricasoli through her maternal lineage.

The sale to Cesare Spighi thus fell through and the palace was subject to restoration and internal modifications for the future entrance of Emanuele Giuseppe Ceferino—also nicknamed “Pepito”—with his wife Luisa and daughter Caterina.



A new decorative season: stucco and frescoes within the building

The construction site opened once more, yet again under the supervision of architect Tito Bellini.

Between September and December 1903, following the repeated requests of the Municipality of Florence to restore the façades that were in need of swift maintenance and repainting, the mason Raphael Morozzi proceeded with repairing the damaged walls, while the company of decorator Serafino Fantechi took care of repainting the exterior walls of the palace and stables.

Work continued also within the building, this time under the watch of Professor Angelo Filippi. Here, painter Attilio Fantechi replaced the wallpaper that had been previously glued to the walls with tempera and friezes. New mirrors and fireplaces were added to the existing decor while part of the furniture was cleared out to make way for new purchases from Florentine and Parisian antique dealers.

Of great importance and extent was the work of the plasterers and decorators of the company Fratelli Filippi who, in 1904, created new stuccoes for many rooms in the palace, some of which are hardly identifiable today—in the Countess' boudoir, the “green room,” the ballroom (where the Canevaro and Ridolfi family crests were added at the corners of the ceiling), the library vault, the chambers of the Count and the Countess, the staircase, the dining room, the dressing rooms of both Counts, and the porter's lodge.

The stucco decorations came to cost a total of 14,387,00 lire, a huge sum when compared with the invoices of all other craftsmen and masons who worked in the palace.

On the vault of the library on the piano nobile, the plasterer's work served as a precious frame for a fresco

LEFT PAGE: DETAIL OF THE ALLEGORY OF WISDOM, FRESCO ON THE VAULT OF THE LIBRARY ON THE FIRST FLOOR.

PAGE 45: GILDED STUCCO AND PAINTINGS IN THE DINING ROOM; DETAIL OF A SHIELD SIMILAR TO THOSE IN THE LIBRARY VAULT.



DINING ROOM, FRESCO WITH
BACCHUS AND ARIADNE.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: MICHELE
GARINEI, ALLEGORY OF WISDOM
(AFTER LUCA GIORDANO), AS A
WHOLE AND IN DETAIL.

whose theme was appropriate to the environment in which it was positioned.

In this context, Florentine painter Michele Garinei (1871-1960) was instructed to replicate the Allegory of Divine Wisdom, painted in 1685-1686 by Luca Giordano for the library of the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi in Florence. The composition which—with few variations—reproduces the original model almost exactly, sees a male figure in armor at the center, representing Human Intellect that—with the help of Science (the winged figures surrounding him)—is freed from the binds and captivity of earthly ignorance and, wearing the wings of reasoning, faces the sky to observe the naked Truth at the feet of Divine Wisdom. The latter, seated on a celestial sphere, with scepter and globe in hand and divine flames overhead, illuminates all the figures below, including the representation of Mathematics, who gives wings to Intellect, and Philosophy, who hands him a mirror. Theology, rather, is the figure in flight, a hand stretched towards Intellect in order to allow him to rise.

A cartouche, held by putti and depicted in the lower margin of the fresco, bears the text derived from a poem by Petrarch, “LEVAN DI TERRA A CIEL OUR INTELLETO” (X, Verse 9) that constitutes the subject of the artwork.



A reference to the work of Luca Giordano, even if rather generic, is also present in the painting on the vault of the dining room on the same floor of the palace. The fresco with Bacchus and Ariadne by an unknown artist depicts the episode of the myth in which the god





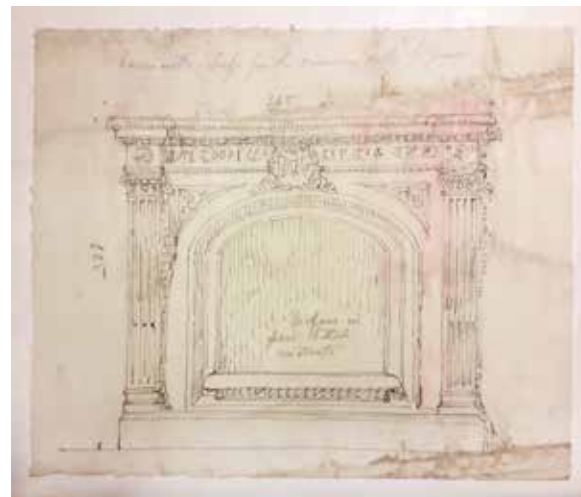
DOOR PROJECT FOR THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING (STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORENCE, CANEVARO ZOAGLI ARCHIVE, 599).

RIGHT AND BELOW: DOORS ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING, AS A WHOLE AND IN DETAIL.



finds the beautiful Ariadne, daughter of King Minos, abandoned by Theseus on the island of Naxos, and later decides to marry her. The typology of the subject is not so much one of triumph but a scene of two lovers uniting, with Ariadne laying on the ground scantily dressed and sleeping, not seeming particularly suited to a banquet hall and thus leading one to suppose that this room had a different and more intimate purpose prior to its conversion into a dining area.

Between 1918 and 1920, the masonry, plumbing and electrical works commenced, this time on the second floor of the building, in an area once reserved for the private rooms of Count Raffaele Canevaro and his wife Ines which, following the death of the Count in 1919, passed entirely into the hands of their son Emanuele Giuseppe. The old doors were replaced with simple and elegant ones, while the entire building was fitted out with a new heating system and a shaft was prepared for the installation of an electric elevator, purchased by the Counts to adapt the structure to the most modern needs of the abode.



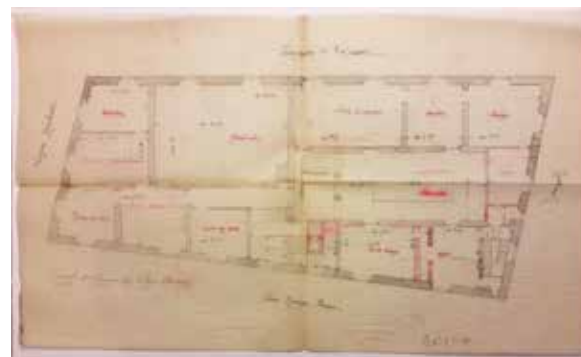
FIREPLACE PROJECT FOR THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING (STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORENCE, CANEVARO DI ZOAGLI ARCHIVE, 599).

BELOW: THE FIREPLACE IN A ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING.



New stoves and fireplaces were designed on this occasion and installed in the private rooms of the masters.

The application of the stucco also continued throughout this quarter, although no traces remain of it today. Nonetheless, the surviving illustrations allow us to understand the revised distribution of the rooms throughout the floor, along with their function. Around the large hall was a reception parlor, a boudoir, two service rooms, an office, and a dining room. On the other side was a large room used as a wardrobe, the Count's study, a living room, the Count's bedroom with a frescoed ceiling, that of the Countess, and the dressing room of the latter frescoed with flying putti and river scenes.



LEFT: FLOORPLAN OF THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING (STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORENCE, CANEVARO DI ZOAGLI ARCHIVE, 191).

From stables to a palace: Giuseppe Castellucci's project

Following the extensive works to refurbish the main building, the Dukes wanted to readapt the annex to the garden, used until that point in time—as per Giuseppe Poggi's original project—as a stable for six horses and as a carriage house.

The idea was to raise the building, increase the surface area and transform it into a residential property, then alter the spaces once used for horses and carriages to be apartments to be rented out.

The architect appointed to oversee the project this time was Giuseppe Castellucci (Arezzo, 1863–Florence, 1939), Professor of Architectural Design at the Accademia di Firenze, known especially for his work in restoring ancient buildings in Tuscany.

On November 27, 1928, the City of Florence's Building Department approved the modification plan that had been submitted by the executor of the works, Ilario Piccardi, under Castellucci's direction and authorization.

PROJECT BY GIUSEPPE CASTELLUCCI TO TRANSFORM THE STABLES INTO A SMALL PALAZZO (STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORENCE, CANEVARO DI ZOAGLI ARCHIVE, 598).

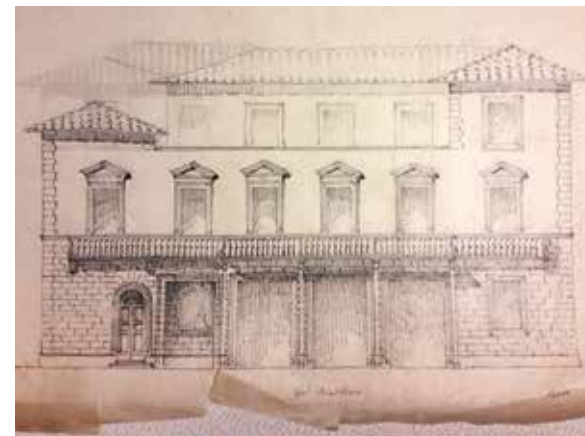


Yet, this approval subsequently required permission from the Municipal Cultural Heritage Office, given that the works were to be carried out in a panoramic point of the city—the Lungarno—whose vista could have been damaged by an erroneous increase in the building's height. The Cultural Heritage Office regarded the opinion of the Superintendent for monuments, expressing a favorable opinion in regards to the improvements that would result from the restoration of the building and given that the structure was behind the line of the road and thus any impact upon the view of the Lungarno could be excluded.

At the beginning of December, the Podestà granted a “nihil obstat” regarding the request for the “reduction and raising” of the stables. The works commenced.

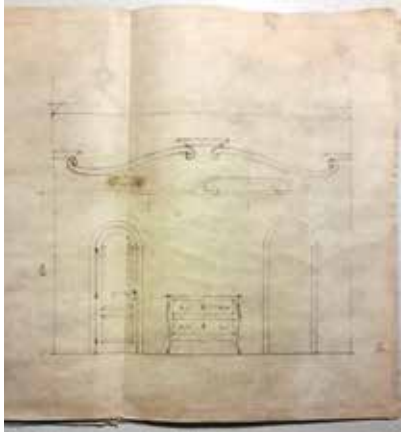
The worksite was operative until August the following year, while the building became habitable as of 1931. The improvements introduced by Castellucci led to a radical transformation of the interior spaces and the dimensions of the old annex—part of the ground floor became a dwelling and a large environment was reserved by the owner for use as a garage. The mezzanine above was demolished and transformed into a first floor, above which a second floor was raised, being for residential use.

The Canevaro Counts still maintained exclusive use of the main building, while the new edifice—with the exception of the garage—was rented to various tenants.



ABOVE AND LEFT: EXTERNAL FAÇADES OF THE STABLE CONVERTED INTO A BUILDING, DESIGNED BY GIUSEPPE CASTELLUCCI (STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORENCE, CANEVARO DI ZOAGLI ARCHIVE, 598).

Ferdinando Poggi: new changes to the ground floor



INTERIOR FAÇADE OF A ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR, DESIGNED BY FERDINANDO POGGI (STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORENCE, CANEVARO DI ZOAGLI ARCHIVE, 212-214).

At the behest of Duchess Dianora Guicciardini, Duke Canevaro's second wife, the 1940s began with the set-up of a small apartment on the ground floor of the building, in the three rooms facing the Arno river embankment, frescoed with the Allegory of Geography and the Allegory of History.

The works took place over two years and came at a total cost of 27,713,90 lire, including masonry and plumbing works, electrical installations, majolica cladding, stucco works and painting.

Ferdinando Poggi (Florence 1902-1986), nephew of Giuseppe Poggi—in whose footsteps he followed by becoming an architect and engineer—oversaw the project to rearrange the quarters, collecting quotes from various craftsmen, creating designs and drawing up the final statement.

Gaetano Ciampolini was commissioned for the painting of the walls, who simply coated the rooms in tempera, with the creation of cornices and finishes in imitation stone around the windows and the base of certain rooms.

An interior wall façade designed by Poggi shows us that the walls were to be very basic, characterized simply by a stucco frame that ran above the centered doors, with a final result that was unfussy and refined.

The last Canevaro: from private home to a diplomatic seat

During the time in which Duke Emanuele Giuseppe Ceferino resided in the Palazzo with his second wife, Dianora Guicciardini, the building became one of the most frequented salons of Italian and foreign diplomacy in Florence.

This tradition was maintained by the Duke son Raffaele 'Lele' Canevaro and his wife Terry Campeiro.

The latter, however, did not dwell in the palace flanking the Lungarno. It appears that the Duke—due to the Villa in Zoagli having been damaged by bombings during the Second World War and his wish to restore this historic structure—decided to sell the Florentine palace together with that constructed at the beginning of the century in Forte dei Marmi, to concentrate his financial resources on the partially demolished Villa in Zoagli.

Interest in the building up for sale was immediately shown by an excellent buyer: the American Consul Walter Orebaugh, an active fighter in Italy during the Resistance.

On December 30, 1947, the Consul entered into a sales contract with Caterina Canevaro di Zoagli and Duke Raffaele, covering the building and all annexes (garden and the smaller building) for the sum of 75 million lire. The accommodation structure in the building within the garden was closed as the American consulate moved from Via Tornabuoni to Lungarno Vespucci 38, where it remains to this day.

Chronology (1854-1947)

1854	Lots are put up for sale in the new Cascine district by the Municipality of Florence. The Calcagnini d'Este family purchase land for the construction of their building.
1857	Giuseppe Poggi completes studies for the Calcagnini construction and works commence.
1859	Construction on the building concludes. The Marquises Calcagnini d'Este move in.
1864-1865	Development of the Urban Plan for the city of Florence by Giuseppe Poggi.
1865-1871	Florence, Capital of Italy
September 5, 1866	Marquis Manfredo Calcagnini sells the palace to Count Francesco Arese Lucini. Upon the death of Count Francesco, the building passed to his son, Marco Arese.
June 16, 1883	Marco Arese sells the palace to Duke Francesco José Canevaro di Zoagli
1884	The Canevaro Dukes begin renovation works on the palace, directed by architect Tito Bellini. Florentine carpenters, masons, decorators and plasterers are called to restore the façades and interior of the building, in many cases preserving the pre-existing decorations and adding the family's heraldic crests.
1886-1887	Giuseppe Poggi publishes two volumes containing his major architectural projects for private individuals, including that of Palazzo Calcagnini d'Este (by now owned by the Canevaro). The architect describes the complex genesis of the building, constructed within an irregular perimeter and on pre-existing foundations.
November 9, 1900	With a private contract, Duke Francesco José Canevaro di Zoagli undertakes to sell the palace to engineer

Cesare Spighi along with garden and stables, excluding furniture, for 355,000 lire, provided that the sale is concluded by December 31 of that same year. Shortly after signing the private agreement, José Canevaro dies in a railway accident.

The sales contract with Cesare Spighi expires, the palace passed to Raffaele Canevaro who became its owner, with the aim of giving it as a wedding gift to his son Emanuele Giuseppe Ceferino and bride, Countess Luisa Ridolfi. **1901**

Restoration works begin on the façades and interior halls of the palace in preparation for the arrival of Emanuele Giuseppe Canevaro, his wife Luisa Ridolfi and daughter Caterina. Architect Tito Bellini oversees the external works on the building, while mason Raffaello Morozzi completes the work on the walls and the company Fantechi repaints the façades. **1903**

Restoration and decoration works take place inside the building, directed by Professor Angelo Filippi. Attilio Fantechi oversees the pictorial decorations of the interior. The wallpaper is replaced with tempera and friezes. **1903-1904**

The Fratelli Filippi company oversees the stucco decorations for a total sum of 14,387,00 lire. Painter Michele Garinei creates a fresco for the ceiling of the library with a motif taken from Luca Giordano. **1904**

New restoration works on the interior and the quarters on the second floor take place. The building is equipped with a modern heating system and an electric elevator. **1918-1920**

After receiving the permission from the Superintendent of monuments, the Florence municipality authorizes the request to raise the stables. The works, directed by architect Giuseppe Castellucci, involve the radical transformation of the annexed rooms with the addition of a new floor for residential use. **December 1, 1928 - August 23, 1929**

Architect Ferdinando Poggi oversees the project of preparing the apartment on the ground floor. Cited amongst the decorators is painter Gaetano Ciampolini. **1941-1942**

The American Consulate becomes owner of the building, through a sales contract between the Canevaro heirs (Caterina Canevaro di Zoagli nei Ghelli and Duke Raffaele Canevaro di Zoagli, the children of Emanuele Giuseppe Ceferino). **December 30, 1947**

Catalog of pictorial works

HERALDIC CREST ROOM - ground floor



Unknown artist
Mural
(circa 1857)

Wall decoration on the vaulted ceiling of the room reproducing the heraldic crests of the Calcagnini d'Este and Ruschi families, as the first owners of the Palace. The Calcagnini shield, dominated by a stork, bears the motto of loyalty IL EST BIEN SECRET ("The secret is well-kept"). The Ruschi shield is accompanied by the motto NIL DIFFICILE VOLENTI ("Nothing is difficult for he who is willing").

ROOM OF ALLEGORY OF GEOGRAPHY - ground floor



Unknown artist
Mural
Second half of the 19th century

Wall decoration on the vaulted ceiling in the room with a central reproduction of the Allegory of Geography measuring a celestial sphere. Extending from this scene are four segments adorned with grotesques and putti intent on playing with maps, telescopes and spheres. Along the frieze of the fake cornice are sixteen representations of animals, alternating with monochrome figures of ancient deities within niches.

ROOM OF THE ALLEGORY OF HISTORY - ground floor



Unknown Emilian artist (?)
Mural
Second half of the 19th century

Wall decoration on the vaulted ceiling in the room with a central reproduction of the Allegory of History accompanied by Time and Fame; in the corners are the four cardinal virtues—Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude

and Justice—along with other allegorical figures of moral virtues within the lunettes. The work is characterized by a clear resumption of 18th-century models that could have been borrowed from the quadratura tradition of Emilia.



THE U.S. CONSULATE'S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - ground floor

Follower of Marco Ricci
Landscape with bridge and figures
Oil on canvas
61 x 88 cm
18th century

The work depicts a river landscape that opens up onto an unspoiled horizon, where small figures, barely sketched, can be seen resting along the banks of the river. At the center is a bridge with curved arches while the vegetation that frames the scene is comprised of tall trees with shady fronds created for the successive transparent veiling. The painting has recently been the subject of a conservative restoration by the SACI's Department of Conservation.



BALLROOM - first floor

Bucolic and pastoral scenes
Murals
Second half of the 19th century

Monochrome wall paintings with various pastoral subjects positioned over the room's door, above the mirrors and around the base of the side walls of the room. Most of these decorations have undergone heavy remodeling and repainting that renders it difficult to complete an adequate stylistic analysis.



Unknown artist (after Pietro Benvenuti)
Portrait of Luisa of Naples and Sicily, Grand Duchess of Tuscany
Oil on canvas
56 x 43 cm
Late 18th century (after 1791)

In 1790, the daughter of Ferdinand I, King of the Two Sicilies, and Maria Carolina of Austria, married her cousin Ferdinand I of Austria, who became Grand Duke of Tuscany that same year. The portrait shows a young



queen in the first years of marriage. Great attention has been paid to the emblematic hairstyles as per the fashion of the time—a wig with curls falling on the shoulders and tête de mouton (or “sheep’s head”) style, adorned with a valuable tiara. The embroidered silk cape that covers her shoulders resembles that depicted by Pietro Benvenuti in the official portrait of the sovereign following her arrival to Florence in 1791.



Unknown artist (after Pietro Benvenuti)
Portrait of Ferdinand III, Grand Duke of Tuscany
 Oil on canvas
 56 x 43 cm
 Late 18th century (after 1791)

Ferdinand III, son of Grand Duke Leopold II, ascended to the throne of the Tuscan Grand Duchy in 1790, when his father became Archduke of Austria. This small portrait, together with that of the bride Luisa Maria Amalia, has its prototype in the full-figure painting by Pietro Benvenuti in 1791, today in Arezzo (Palazzo della Fraternita dei Laici). The lapel on Ferdinand’s garment bears the symbol of the Order of the Golden Fleece, a powerful chivalry organization, of which the Habsburgs held sovereignty.

LIBRARY - first floor



Michele Garinei
Fresco decoration
 1904
Fratelli Filippi – stucco embellishment

The room was frescoed at the behest of the Canevaro Counts by the Tuscan painter Michele Garinei with the Allegory of Wisdom, a subject taken specifically from a fresco by Luca Giordano painted on the vault of the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence. The scroll at the base, supported by two putti, bears a verse by Petrarch—“Levan di terra a ciel nostro intelletto”—in reference to the subject depicted, the human Intellect who—with the help by Science—is freed from the binds of earthly ignorance to ascend to heaven where divine Wisdom awaits.

Unknown artist of the Venetian school (?)
Still life with flowers and pears
 Oil on canvas
 67.5 cm x 78.3 cm
 Late 17th century-early 18th century



The painting depicts a composition of flowers and pears on a landscaped backdrop much like examples taken from the Venetian context and from the painting of Elisabetta Marchioni of Rovigo. The work—heavily abraded in the central area and repainted along the entire lower part—has recently been subject to a conservative restoration by the SACI’s Department of Conservation.

Andrea Landini (1847-1912)
Lady in a pink gown
 Oil on canvas
 208 x 145 cm
 1880



The painting, dated and signed, depicts a seductive noblewoman dressed in an elegant pink evening gown with a pronounced neckline that showcases her jewels, a satin slipper, and a fur coat splayed across the back of the sofa on which she is seated. In the background is a glimpse of a typical 19th-century living room decorated with wallpaper, a carved and painted screen, and a sophisticated sofa.

LIVING ROOM - first floor

Unknown artist
Portrait of Virginia Febei
 Oil on canvas
 94 x 68.5 cm
 Mid-18th century



Portrait of Maria Virginia Febei depicted with a carnation in hand, being the symbol of marriage. There is little information regarding the noblewoman, with her clothing and jewelry meticulously detailed to emphasize her prestige. A note on the back of the painting indicates the year of her union with the groom Emilio Piccolomini Clementini in 1726.



Unknown artist
Portrait of Emilio Piccolomini Clementini
 Oil on canvas
 94 x 68.5 cm
 Mid-18th century

Portrait of Emilio Piccolomini Clementini, who belonged to an ancient and noble Tuscan lineage present in the Siena territory. The oval reflects that of his bride, Maria Virginia Febei. The painting has undergone extensive pictorial retouching.



Unknown artist (Florentine school)
Portrait of Knight of the Order of Saint Stephen
 Oil on canvas
 200.5 x 147.5 cm
 Second half of the 16th century

The painting depicts a full-length character with a scroll in hand bearing the inscription "Al Serenissimo Gran Duca di Toscana mio Signore." The red cross of the religious and chivalrous Order of Saint Stephen—founded by Cosimo I de' Medici in 1561—is embroidered on the sumptuous cloak, as well as the rest of the black silk garments, the gorget, and the necklace with the symbol of the order, indicating an indisputable connection of the figure portrayed with the Medici house to which it pays tribute. The composition of the work is based on models of portraiture common throughout the second half of the 16th century, with the presence of a red drape framing the scene, an ancient sculpture representing a Victory behind the knight, and small objects placed on the table, evidently alluding to his office.



Filippo Maria Galletti (?)
Portrait of Princess Violante Beatrice di Baviera dressed as Diana
 Oil on canvas
 86.5 x 73 cm
 Late 17th century (1693?)

The portrait depicts a noblewoman in the guise of Diana—with bow, arrows, tiara with moon and a dog—as was used by the ladies in the 17th century in reference to the virtues of beauty and chastity attributed to the goddess. The figure could refer, given the characteristic countenance, to Violante Beatrice di Bavaria, wife of Grand Prince Ferdinand de' Medici, who had an unhappy and childless marriage with her spouse. From a stylistic comparison of this work with the portrait of Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici by Florentine Filippo Maria Galletti,

there are remarkable similarities that would lead to the painting being attributed to this artist, who undoubtedly also completed in 1693—amongst several other portrayals—that of Princess Violante as Diana.

Unknown artist (Tuscan school?)
Portrait of Officer in Uniform
 Oil on canvas
 66 x 52 cm
 Circa 1860

The character portrayed in this painting is unknown, even though the golden epaulettes and applications on the uniform denote the subject as belonging to a high rank of the Italian army or navy. Applied to the uniform is a gilded shield with symbols that are difficult to read, along with a stork, a detail that could indicate some relationship with the Calcagnini d'Este family.



Unknown artist (Tuscan school?)
Portrait of a lady in a Blue Silk Gown and Gloves
 Oil on canvas
 73.5 x 56 cm
 Circa 1850

Portrait of a woman who is hard to identify. The well-kept and composed hairstyle, gathered with neat curls along both sides of the face, was fashionable amongst ladies of the upper-class for a certain period around the middle of the century. Added to this aspect are the delicate details of the embroidered gloves and jewelry being worn, such as the pearl necklace emphasized by the gown that reveals her shoulders, inevitable attributes indicative of the social status of the portrayed figure. Also of interest is the positioning of the hands, overlapping and gathered in the lap, which recalls famous Renaissance examples and thus reflects the renewed interest in this artistic period that took place during the 19th century.



DINING ROOM - first floor

Unknown artist
Bacchus and Ariadne
 Mural
 Second half of the 19th century

The painting on the vault of the room represents Bacchus' discovery, followed by festive putti and satyrs, of the beautiful Ariadne, abandoned by Theseus on the island of Naxos. The typology of the subject does not seem particularly suited to a dining room, leading to the supposition that this room once had a different and more intimate purpose.





Unknown artist
Four oval canvases with flower pots in oil on canvas
Oil on canvas
Second half of the 19th century

The four canvases, depicting floral arrangements, are part of the wall decoration of the room, being set in the corners of the walls inside four stucco ovals supported by putti.

PUTTI ROOM - second floor



Unknown artist and illusionistic ceiling painter
Mural
1857 (?)

The vault of the room, used as a private dressing room during the Canevaro period of residence, depicts four flying putti, bearing a basket of flowers, and four river scenes within circular scores. The floral motifs at the corners of the ceiling and the undulating moldings of the gables that appear to project, suggesting a connection of this work with that created on the ground floor for the heraldic crest room.

STILL LIFE ROOM - second floor



Unknown artist
Mural
1857 (?)

The room, which was once Duke Canevaro's bedroom, is characterized by a thick polylobed quadratura enriched with volutes, masks and shells with floral arrangements. The taste for the rugged lines of the painted quadratura suggests a link to this work with the Calcagnini period of residence, also being proponents of the stucco works of the ballroom, defined by architect Giuseppe Poggi as Rococo style. The central area of the ceiling has undergone consistent cleaning and restoration operations that are clearly evident beneath the false wooden trellis, due to the presence of an underlying spiral decoration.



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ARCHIVI

State Archives of Florence

State Archives of Modena

Historical Archives of the City of Florence

Uffizi Library

Science and Technology Library – University of Florence

Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario G.P. Vieusseux

